

active sympathy with the class from which he sprang. He has his human side, especially in social intercourse with his students and fellow-doctors, but he plays the theologian pure and simple towards the common man, and cannot understand why he cannot be content to suffer for the benefit of the higher classes. While the apostle of rebellion against pope and priest, he is the apostle of force and subjection against the mass of his fellow-men. For he would not recall the bloodthirsty tract, nor apologise for it as the offspring of momentary passion. "As the ass must have blows, so the mass must be ruled by force," is his fixed conviction, and his remedy for recalcitrant servants was the patriarchal one of "treating serfs like any other beast." He joined with Spalatin and Melancthon in making light of Knight Einsiedel's conscientious scruples about his feudal rights over his peasants. Spalatin jocularly told him to try "a dear little consolation psalm." Even the "mild" Melancthon had no compunction in turning the screw on the common man. In the refutation of the Twelve Articles which he wrote for the Elector Palatine he pronounced the serfish condition of the people far too mild, and strongly advocated the more rigorous application of the criminal law. Had he ever peered into the torture chamber at Nurnberg? The prince, he insists, has the right to demand absolute submission to his will, to tax his subjects at discretion, without giving any account of how he applies the revenue so raised. He may even alienate the common lands for his own profit.

Luther's brutal thirst for the blood of the insurgents was destined to receive an early quenching. The princes were preparing to take a terrible vengeance in the spirit of their theological mentor. The peasants, though inspiring terror far and near by the pillage of castles and monasteries, had wasted their strength and their opportunity in these wild outbursts of violence. The movement was widespread, but it was not cohesive. The hundreds of thousands in the field were split into many bands, which engaged in local raids and sieges, but did not co-operate in any general plan of operations. There does not seem, in fact, to have been a general plan of operations covering the whole area, for the committee at Heilbron never got into proper working order, and had no